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ABSTRACT

In spite of extensive activity in faculty development around the country, no replicable programs have been developed, no viable conceptual models have been formulated, and no guidelines to assist program planners have emerged. Whatever evaluative information has been offered to attest to the results of programs has usually been based on unreliable, inferential, subjective, and unsystematically collected data. Faculty development has become an end in itself, and if the current messy state continues it is destined to fulfill the prediction of many and become just another fad. What most so-called faculty development experts and theorists seem to forget is that higher education is a system. If the school as a system does not achieve its objective--if the students are not learning adequately--the school must be redesigned until it does. Two comprehensive efforts at professional development serve as examples of such redesign: the Center for Professional Development, established in the office of the chancellor of the California State University and Colleges and encompassing a variety of programs on six campuses; and an institutional change project at the UCLA School of Dentistry. The implementation was different in the two situations, but each project treated the school as an entity within which functions can be reorganized. (Author/MSE)

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FACULTY DEVELOPMENT IN PERSPECTIVE:

A Systems Concept

by

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The problem. Faculty development programs currently exist in several large state systems, community college districts and over 1,000 colleges and universities. Hundreds of thousands of dollars have been poured into the development of such programs by the Federal government and private foundations, as well as by the colleges and universities themselves. Yet, in spite of all this activity, no replicable programs have been developed, no viable conceptual models have been formulated, and no guidelines to assist programs planners have emerged. Whatever evaluative information has been offered to attest to the results of programs has usually been based on unreliable, inferential, subjective and unsystematically collected data.

Faculty are the major resource of colleges and universities, and their talents, interests and skills must be systematically cultivated and nurtured as part of their on-going professional growth and development. Unfortunately, however, the popular response to this surprisingly recent revelation has been a staggering amount of pompous rhetoric on the value of faculty development; a proliferation of untested, pedestrian models of varying

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unnecessary complexity; overly simplistic and equally pompous conceptualizations which purport to provide a "logical rationale" for making illogical and arbitrary distinctions between "personal", "professional", and "organizational" development; and even worse, an influx of poorly designed, haphazard and fragmented attempts at program implementation.

Some poorly trained, self-styled evangelists are promoting, under the rubric of faculty development, "life-planning workshops" and t-groups designed to explore (whatever that means) faculty members' styles and values without apparent sensitivity to either the very real dangers of their conducting this type of therapy or the relation of such "therapy" to institutional problems and needs.

Still others conduct workshops on instructional methodology which stress the evils of the lecture format without a shred of evidence that suggests that any one method is superior to another as far as bringing about learning is concerned. The term faculty development has, in fact, become a ponderous euphemism used to describe a wide variety of disparate activities which involve faculty directly (or some times indirectly) and range from one-day workshops to curricular revisions, departmental reorganizations and even programs of planned institutional change. Rarely have these efforts been coordinated into a clearly articulated and carefully planned program for the improvement of teaching.

Program planning has typically included only an assessment of faculty needs by asking them what kinds of workshops and what topics they would like addressed. Programs that have not been rigorously evaluated "at home" are being emanated on other campuses--with even less scrutiny.

The danger is that as more colleges and universities rush to jump on the bandwagon in the hopes of winning federal or foundation money (or even in the belief that such programs are effective), they will institute ever-more shaky, shot-gun programs which at best represent tokenism; at worst, they will lead to an alienation of both faculty and administrators from the whole notion of improving the quality of education through faculty development. The existence of faculty development programs for their own sake appears to have become the norm.

Faculty development has become "big business", but the means have become confused with the ends, and the basic goal, that of improving the quality of education -- the goal which gave rise to the faculty development movement in the first place -- has been lost. Faculty development has become an end in itself and if the current messy state continues, it is destined to fulfill the prediction of many and become just another fad, joining the historical ranks of other more exotic higher education-based fads of telephone booth stuffing and panty raids. No potential fad is currently more obvious than higher education's faculty and professional development movement.

Such an end would be unfortunate, but it is inevitable unless we back up a little and reexamine the issue from its proper perspective. It may well be that the reason it is presently difficult, if not impossible, to develop models, replicable programs or even guidelines, is <u>not</u> that faculty at different institutions are so dissimilar, as some contend, but that the needs of the institutions are different. Reconceptualized and properly organized, development programs can become rooted and institutionalized as viable and

effective means for improving the quality of higher education, providing students with effective instruction which promotes both their personal development and their academic achievement, and thereby making a significant positive impact upon the entire higher education system. And that last word, "system", is the key.

What most so-called faculty development experts and theorists seem to forget is that higher education is a system, composed of people (students, teachers and administrators), buildings, books, courses, curricula, programs and environments. Accountability for results, including those of faculty development programs, is a system concept -- a set of mutual, interrelated functions and relationships which operate together to achieve a defined purpose: providing students with an opportunity to learn. The school is the basic unit. Thus, if the school, as a system, does not achieve its objective -- if the students are not learning adequately -- the school must be redesigned until they do.

Redesign may involve redesigning buildings, upgrading resources, changing the curriculum, improving instructional materials and/or upgrading the skills of the faculty. Like the other items listed, the skills, attitudes and training of the faculty are the means to achieve the stated end. Instead of haphazardly plunking a faculty development program into the middle of an operating institution, with little or no relationship to or consideration for the goals and needs of the institution, the goals of a faculty development program should be established by the needs of the institution, plus the needs of the faculty. But only as those needs relate to the goals and objectives of the system.

For example, it is common knowledge that in order to achieve its objectives, an institution must maintain a well-managed organization with effective leadership. If it appears that the leadership of a college or department is ineffective and that situation is diagnosed as a major cause of the college's or department's failure to meet its objectives, that institution might more appropriately design a professional leadership program for its administrators.

On the other hand, if it is diagnosed, on the basis of empirically derived data, that students are not learning as they should because instruction is ineffective, then a faculty development program which upgrades and improves the faculty's instructional skills is obviously in order. Each component in the system is accountable for that portion of the teaching-learning process over which it has or should have control. This situation presupposes, of course, the existence of well-defined institutional objectives for education; and there's the rub.

Few institutions have clearly defined, measurable institutional objectives, and without them, the effectiveness of the institution and its components (schools, departments and programs) cannot be properly evaluated by even the most able researcher. Without institutional evaluation, in turn, truly relevant and viable development programs directed toward improving student learning cannot be designed for either faculty or administrators.

Two comprehensive efforts at professional development with which the authors were intimately connected will serve as examples

to support these contentions. One concerns an extensive program in a large state college system; the other, one at a professional school of a major university.

The Center for Professional Development. The first example is the Center for Professional Development which was established in the Office of the Chancellor, California State University and Colleges, in July, 1974.* Funded by the Chancellor's Office and the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE) at approximately $.5 million over a 3-year period, the Center was established to coordinate and guide faculty development programs on 6 campuses in the CSUC system. A major goal of the Center was to test alternative strategies for faculty development at several campuses ranging in size, location, programmatic thrust and other institutional and environmental variables. It was hoped, of course, that by testing out different kinds of programs at different kinds of institutions, definitive guidelines could be developed for other colleges and universities concerning which kinds of programs (or program elements) worked best in which ways on what kinds of campuses.

The six campuses selected to participate in the Center's program ranged from a small, relatively isolated campus with 129 faculty and 3,489 students to a large, metropolitan university with 900 faculty and serving 26,794 students.

Two campus programs consisted primarily of assorted workshops for small groups of faculty based on the type of needs assessment described earlier -- a survey of what kinds of topics faculty were interested in hearing about. No assessment of either

*The authors served as Director and Associate Director of the Center, respectively, from 1974-75.

institution's effectiveness in bringing about student learning or development was undertaken, and, as a result, no assessment of institutional needs for development was possible.

Attendance at workshops during the first year was excellent on both campuses. Seventy-five percent of the faculty on one campus and over 60% on the other participated in a series of workshops on Piagetian theory, computer-assisted instruction, experiential learning, testing and grading, and proposal writing. The problem was that by the end of the first year, they had run out of "new" topics which motivated the faculty's interest; and it is doubtful, in our opinion, that either program will ultimately have an impact on the institutions or their educational programs.

A third campus program consisted of the development of diagnostic self-appraisal instruments for use by faculty to assess their teaching capabilities and effectiveness, as well as the development of resource units that correspond to the various dimensions of the instruments to assist faculty in improving or supplementing their teaching skills. The project staff compiled an extensive number of items and categorized and coded them to form an item pool from which self-appraisal forms could be developed by the faculty themselves in their areas of interest. An equally extensive array of instructional materials were developed and self-instructional modules were prepared for dissemination.

Again, however, the needs assessment which formed the base of the project, although more rigorously conducted, concentrated on faculty, not on institutional needs and problems. Even more strange, despite the fact that in the needs assessment, the faculty overwhelmingly endorsed the need for self-evaluation, few were willing to use the instruments once they were developed. Some

departments refused to cooperate at all, and despite the intrinsic merits of the project, it is highly doubtful that it will have any lasting impact on the university.

A fourth campus focused on a mini-grant program for faculty to develop "innovations" -- primarily the development of course and curricular materials. The problem with this program was simply that like all mini-grant programs for faculty-developed projects, the products are of questionable instructional value. It is not that the faculty who receive mini-grants are malevolent; it is that most faculty are simply not trained instructional developers or evaluators of instructional material effectiveness. As a result, while they might serve as motivating forces for faculty to examine their teaching practices and processes, mini-grant programs implemented through an individual department, institution or even system office rarely make any meaningful change in instructional practices.

The other problem with this program was that much of the supplemental money they were using initially ran out. The second year saw a flurry of activity in a number of different directions, from workshops on instructional methods to faculty-administrator retreats. None of these activities were coordinated or related in any conceptual way and, again, bore no relation to institutional needs or goals.

An Institute for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning formed the focal point for the faculty development program instituted at another campus. The Institute is composed of and directed by a group of 14 departmentally-nominated and presidentially-appointed faculty who meet regularly each week and report on carefully planned institutional research projects which in-

vestigate many aspects of teaching and learning relevant to that campus.

In addition, the Institute sponsors one-day and weekly seminar programs for the faculty at-large, informal departmental and school "gatherings" and system-wide conferences. Although this program also was not derived from a comprehensive institutional self-analysis, it was in large measure planned to deal with the concerns frequently stated by students and faculty alike that the quality of education on the campus was suffering from a pervasive lack of collegiality and sense of common purpose. Thus, the program was at least directed toward a clearly defined institutional need rather than at a series of "interesting topics".

Although the program was not initially conceptualized to be directly focused on institutional goals or needs, it became so because of the insight, commitment, dedication and purposefulness of the program director. Almost singlehandedly, but with the cooperation and support of the administration and faculty, he has brought about an institutional analysis and is guiding the program, enlarging its scope toward this direction. It is highly likely that this program will have, beyond that which it already has had, a real impact on the instructional program and processes of this large, suburban university.

An entirely different, but equally carefully planned, type of program was designed solely for administrators and for the most part resulted from a conscientious institutional self-study and a university-wide commitment to professional development and teaching improvement. This project basically involves a seminar program for the 45 chairpersons and deans focusing on the profes-

sional development of administrators and their role in facilitating faculty development. Topics addressed in the on-going seminars range from general philosophical issues in higher education to specific campus concerns such as affirmative action policies, improving channels of communication between all constituencies within the university, and academic standards and grading policies. Approximately 95 percent of the deans and department chairs have participated voluntarily in this program, and already, institutional policies and practices affecting both students and faculty have changed in a positive direction.

All of the campus staffs on each of the six campuses were dedicated and committed to making their projects successful. The Chancellor's Office, and particularly the Center staff, have been equally committed to the program. Yet, despite the vast amounts of money, time and energy invested in the various projects, with the exception of the last two programs described, it is doubtful that any broad based institutional change, in either programs or policies, will take place; nor will any model programs or definitive guidelines emerge.

As every gourmet cook knows, to make a good souffle, the temperature must be just right or the souffle will fall -- regardless of how well the ingredients are folded. So it is with faculty development. Without a total climate receptive to and supportive of faculty development, it will fall.

The UCLA School of Dentistry. In order to establish the kind of environment that would best facilitate and be most relevant to the process of faculty and instructional development, the authors designed and implemented an institutional change project at the

UCLA School of Dentistry based on the system concept outlined in the beginning of this paper. Three basic assumptions were made regarding the program: 1) that the goal of curricular and faculty development is the improvement of teaching and learning; 2) that any really meaningful changes in the curriculum and, ultimately, improvement in the teaching-learning process, must be based upon a rigorous, comprehensive evaluation; and 3) the focus of such an evaluation must be on outcomes -- outcomes in terms of student achievement and satisfaction; faculty motivation, development and satisfaction; the responsiveness of course offerrings and curricular sequencing; and finally, outcomes in terms of the total school environment.

The first step in the process was to establish systematically developed measurable goals for the School and its departments. Collaboration among the various constituent groups within the School of Dentistry was a major part of the project's implementation plan. Since the intent of the program was curricular and organizational evaluation and responsive change, it was not enough to just "involve" faculty or assess their needs superficially. They needed to generate, as well as agree upon, the goals themselves (with technical assistance provided by the ETI staff) in order for them to feel that the goals were indeed theirs, and thus commit themselves to their attainment.

As a result, we worked with a sub-committee of the standing curricular committee which included one member from each of the 3 major curricular divisions in the school, a representative of the student body and a member of the administration. This group solicited ideas from the general faculty and students and drew up

a tentative list of issues, directions and concerns which formed the basis for the School's first-order goals. The goals were then sent to the entire faculty and a 25 percent sample of students for review. Based upon their revisions and suggestions, the goals were refined and accepted.

Similar procedures were then instituted to establish goals for each of the 14 sections within the school. It should be noted, here, that faculty and student cooperation was outstanding! Over 90 percent of the faculty and more than 60 percent of the students participated in the goal formulation process, and, as a result, became increasingly interested and involved in the whole project. As they clarified more explicitly what they wanted to teach, faculty began to question their effectiveness and wanted to improve their current teaching skills as well as to add a broader range of teaching methods to their repetoire from which they could choose.

Also as a result of defining section goals, which related to the school goals, and developing indices of their attainment, the faculty came to realize that student complaints about evaluation procedures were justified. In many areas, particularly clinical practices, faculty had not established definitive criteria for student performance. At the same time, they were disturbed that students were not performing "up to standard" without realizing that they had not established what that standard was. This awareness led the faculty to ask for assistance in developing tests and criteria and evaluating their teaching effectiveness and their students' performance.

As a result of their renewed interest in teaching and evaluation, the faculty asked us to design and conduct a series of in-service courses addressed to a wide range of topics: from methods' classes on improving lectures and discussions to constructing valid and reliable tests and understanding and promoting students' different styles of learning. The faculty's participation in these programs was so enthusiastic that the administration designated one-half day each week as "Faculty Development Day". Clinics and laboratories are closed and classes are not held so that all faculty will be free to attend the variety of seminar sessions and workshops offered. But the point is not that the faculty are attending in such numbers and with such enthusiasm, but that the faculty development program which emerged as a direct result of the institutional self-analysis is directly related to the needs of the institution and the needs of the faculty as they relate to the institutional needs.

During the goal clarification process, the faculty and students also indicated their dissatisfaction with existing instructional materials and the absence of others which were necessary if certain objectives were to be achieved. Thus, several faculty began working with us on the development of written and mediated self-instructional modules. In fact, one entire section will be completely modularized by the end of the next academic year. This, too, has had an impact on the School and has formed the basis for another series of faculty seminars. As word spread about both the achievement and satisfaction of those students who used the newly developed materials, other faculty wanted to upgrade

their materials with self-instructional modules. As a result, a course teaching faculty how to develop self-instructional materials is the focus of the faculty development program this spring.

Also during the current term, recent graduates of the school are being surveyed and interviewed to determine their actual knowledge, information and behaviors in their practices as they relate to each of the goals which have been established. The results of the survey will be used to evaluate the goals themselves to determine their worth and viability for future graduates, the curriculum will be revised accordingly, the cycle of change and renewal will continue and no doubt, other types of needed faculty development programs will be identified.

What has evolved at the UCLA School of Dentistry is a process of change that has important implications for those interested in promoting faculty development and improving instruction. This certainly should include institutional researchers. Rather than instituting a shotgun "development" program aimed _at_ faculty, as is the fashion these days, we worked _with_ the faculty and administration in what we have come to call a contextual evaluation program -- clarifying instructional and organizational problems, needs and values; developing evaluation mechanisms; identifying and/or developing curricular programs and instructional strategies; and, in the process, building interest, trust and cooperation. It is impossible to separate any of these activities as curricular change, instructional improvement, organizational development or faculty development _per se_. They are all of these, and yet the sum is more. Each is an integral part of contextual evaluation and institutional self-analysis.